

Message Text

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L/OES-MR. DCOLSON(PHONE)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS STATE 033847

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN, PBOR, CA

SUBJECT: TALKS ON GULF OF MAINE AND CONTINENTAL SHELF

1. FOLLOWING NOTE WAS DELIVERED TO CANADIAN EMBASSY TODAY
IN RESPONSE TO THEIR NOTE LAST WEEK, COPY OF WHICH POUCHED
EMBASSY OTTAWA. BEGIN TEXT:

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE REFERS TO THE NOTE OF THE EMBASSY
OF CANADA NO. 52 OF FEBRUARY 2, 1976, CONCERNING THE INTEN-
TION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR TO
PREPARE A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PRELIMINARY
TO A POSSIBLE SALE OF OIL AND GAS LEASES ON THE CONTIN-
ENTAL SHELF IN THE GULF OF MAINE AREA.

THE PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
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PRELIMINARY TO A POSSIBLE SALE OF OIL AND GAS LEASES IS A

STANDARD PROCEDURE UNDER UNITED STATES REGULATIONS. IT IS PART OF THE PROCESS OF WHICH THE EMBASSY OF CANADA WAS ADVISED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S NOTE OF MAY 15, 1975. THE DEPARTMENT CALLS THE ATTENTION OF THE EMBASSY OF CANADA TO THE NEWS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ON JANUARY 2, 1976, WHICH STATES THAT "ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRACTS TO BE STUDIED DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A DECISION TO HOLD AN OCS SALE." IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED THAT THE STUDIES BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR CAN BE CONCLUDED IN LESS THAN TEN MONTHS OR MORE. ANY DECISION WITH REGARD TO OIL AND GAS LEASING IN THE GULF OF MAINE AREA WILL AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THOSE STUDIES.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS PROCEDURAL STEP IN A CONTINUING PROCESS INITIATED LAST SPRING SHOULD AFFECT THE CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS NOW BEING CARRIED ON BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS CONCERNING THE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE GULF OF MAINE AREA. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE REITERATES THE INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN AN AMICABLE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND SHARES THE VIEW OF THE CANADIAN AUTHORITIES THAT AN ACCEPTABLE DELIMITATION ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IS POSSIBLE NOTWITHSTANDING THE DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME IN THE DISCUSSIONS.

AT THE SAME TIME, IN VIEW OF THE POSITION RESTATED IN NOTE NO. 52 OF THE EMBASSY OF CANADA, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE BELIEVES IT NECESSARY TO REITERATE THAT THE STEPS BEING TAKEN BY UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONCERNING THE APPROPRIATE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND THE RIGHTS OF THE UNITED STATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 1958 CONVENTION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND INTERNATIONAL LAW. AS IS WELL KNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT AN EQUIDISTANCE LINE IN THE GULF OF MAINE AREA WOULD SATISFY THESE CRITERIA. IT IS THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES THAT ALL THE TRACTS BEING STUDIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ARE SITUATED ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OF THE
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UNITED STATES.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY AND RELATED MATTERS THAT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF BOTH CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, AND IT IS HOPED THAT A BASIC UNDERSTANDING ON THESE MATTERS CAN BE REACHED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. TO THAT END, THE

DEPARTMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO THE VISIT OF THE CANADIAN
DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON ON FEBRUARY 17 TO RESUME THE DIS-
CUSSIONS WHICH BEGAN SO CONSTRUCTIVELY IN OTTAWA ON
DECEMBER 15.--END TEXT. INGERSOLL

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